

the individuals composing the genus *Hybodus*, confirming the views of Prof. Agassiz. The species is new, and Sir Philip Egerton proposes to name it *Hybodus Bassanus*.

6. The President read extracts from letters lately addressed by M. Dubois de Montperreux and by Prof. Agassiz to Capt. Ibbetson, on the subject of the Neocomian. The former of these geologists states that the Neuchatel beds cannot be regarded as complete, or as the type of that formation, which he considers is best developed in the Crimea and Caucasus. The latter considers the Neocomian as a peculiar stage, and that the very lowest of the cretaceous system.

May 15.—The following papers were read:—

1. A letter from Dr. Ick on some new fossil Crustacea, from the South Staffordshire coal-field.

2. "On the Geology of Cape Breton." By Mr. R. Brown.

The newest stratified rocks in the island of Cape Breton belong to the coal formation. The coal-field of Sidney occupies an area of 250 square miles, and appears, from the dip of the beds, to be a portion of a still more extensive field. The coal measures repose on millstone grit of variable thickness and great extent. Beneath the millstone grit lies carboniferous limestone, associated with extensive beds of gypsum and marls. These gypsiferous beds lie upon conglomerates, which pass downwards into slates, corresponding to the grauwacke formation in Europe. In places the eruption of red granite has converted the schists into white marble. Igneous rocks of various forms, granites, porphyries, greenstone and trap, occupy a considerable portion of the island.

3. "On the anthracite formation of Massachusetts." By Mr. Lyell.

The author states that the fossil plants associated with the anthracite of Wrentham, Cumberland and Mansfield on the borders of the States of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, are of true carboniferous species. The strata containing them, as shown by Hitchcock, Jackson and others, pass into mica-schist, clay-slate, and other metamorphic rocks. The bed of plumbago and anthracite, two feet thick, at Worcester, Massachusetts, is separated from the anthracite before mentioned, by a district of gneiss, thirty-five miles wide. This bed Mr. Lyell regards as coal in a still more completely metamorphic state, all the volatile ingredients having been discharged and carbon alone remaining, the accompanying coal-shales and grits having been turned into carbonaceous clay-slate, mica-schist, with granite and quartzite. No similar beds are found in the North American Silurian formations.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### CAPTURE OF HEMIPODIUS TACHYDROMUS IN BRITAIN.

*To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.*

GENTLEMEN,—I have recently received a bird which appears to me to be new to this country; it is a Quail, having no back toe, and is

not mentioned, I believe, in any work on British ornithology to which I have access; but in Dr. Latham's 'General History' it is described as the *Perdix Gibraltarica*, with which my specimen appears to agree. The bird was shot by the gamekeeper on the Cornwell estate in this county, about three miles from hence, and has been kindly presented to me. It was found in a field of barley, of which kind of grain, by the by, hundreds of acres are still standing, with no prospect of being harvested in a proper state. Before I proceeded to preserve the bird, I took the measure of its various parts, the colour of its eyes, bill and feet, its weight, &c., after which I found its description in the work above alluded to. It was shot on the 29th of October last, since which time another has been killed near the same spot by the same person, but its head was shot off, and otherwise so mutilated as to be unfit for preservation: this might probably complete the pair, mine being a male bird. It had in its gizzard two or three husks of barley, several small seeds similar to charlock, some particles of gravel, and was very fat. It was considerably injured by the shot, but I have set it up in the best manner I could, and consider it a valuable addition to my small collection of British birds. Should this prove to be the only known instance of the capture of the bird in Britain, I shall feel glad in having saved it from oblivion.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

Chipping Norton, Oxon, Nov. 11, 1844.

THOS. GOATLEY.

[The bird in question is the *Hemipodius tachydromus* of Temminck, which is figured in Mr. Gould's 'Birds of Europe,' vol. iv. plate 264. Mr. Gould, to whom we have shown Mr. Goatley's letter, considers this one of the most interesting additions to the British fauna that has occurred for many years.—Ed.]

#### ELATINE HYDROPIPER.

Mr. W. O. Newnham of St. John's College, Cambridge, has found this very rare plant in two ponds near Farnham, Surrey, on opposite sides of the town, namely, Frensham Pond and Cuck Mills Pond: in both places it was accompanied by *E. hexandra*. It is a most interesting addition to the flora of the south of England, and the young naturalist by whom it has been discovered deserves great credit for accuracy of observation. The only recorded localities are in Anglesea and Ireland.—C. C. B.

#### HURA CREPITANS.

A fruit of *Hura crepitans* from which the seeds had been removed (probably by cutting them out), and which had been kept by M. Poncet in a glass for ten years, suddenly burst with a noise like the report of a pistol, and its divisions with the fragments of the glass were scattered about the room. M. Schlectendal informs us that he once left a perfect fruit of this plant on the corner of a stove, and was in the next room, when it burst with a noise as if a quantity of china had fallen to the ground, and its valves and seeds were scattered to the extremities of a room twelve feet square.—*Botanische Zeitung*, Nov. 8, 1844.